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A

S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH

O F

THE REVD DR SAMUEL LAWRENCE,

W H O

DEPARTED THIS LIFE, OCTOBER 1, MDCCLX.

W I T H

AN ADDRESS AT HIS INTERMENT:

BY JAMES FORDYCE, D. D.

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T O
THAT PART OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

ASSEMBLING

IN MONKWELL-STREET, LONDON,

T H E

FOLLOWING SERMON AND ADDRESS

A R E,

WITH THE MOST AFFECTIONATE ZEAL

F O R

THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE FELICITY,

INSCRIBED BY

JAMES FORDYCE.

ERRATUM.

For, he, Page 1. Line 5. read, here.



A

S E R M O N

O N

Rev. xiv. 6.

AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL FLY IN THE
MIDST OF HEAVEN, HAVING THE EVER-
LASTING GOSPEL TO PREACH UNTO THEM
THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH, AND TO
EVERY NATION, AND KINDRED, AND
TONGUE, AND PEOPLE.

—THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL—

THE occasion of the present address is
so deeply solemn and affecting, that
I am sure I shall easily be excused
from entering into any critical enquiry concern-
ing the angel, or the scene he represented.
Whatever person or character we may conceive
to be signified by the one, whatever event or
circumstance we may suppose to be prefigured

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by the other, it will make no sort of difference as to the design or tenour of my discourse, which will turn entirely on the idea given of our divine religion, by that remarkable phrase in the text, "the Everlasting Gospel." An idea which I hope will not appear unseasonable, or prove unsatisfactory, at this time, when the providence of God, and the practice of men, concur with nature and inclination, to call up in your minds, my dear hearers, the most serious reflections on the death of an able, faithful, and I trust I may add, successful minister of Jesus. His ability, faithfulness, and success conspired to recommend him very effectually to our esteem, but were all insufficient to keep him amongst us. To keep him amongst us did I say? Those very things perhaps contributed to his being taken away from us so much the sooner; since the same causes which rendered him so fit to live served to make him only the more fit to die. He is dead, and we shall see his face no more in this world, no more enjoy his friendly conversation, hear his useful instructions no more; matter certainly of just regret to us and to the public. Indeed when we consider the loss which both have suffered, it would present us with a view too dark and

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depressing, were it not for this consolatory thought amongst others, that the Gospel which he preached and practised in so edifying and so engaging a manner is everlasting.

HOWEVER its best ministers one after another may be removed from this sphere of service, the sacred institution itself remains, and will remain throughout all generations ; like its Author, “ the same, yesterday, to-day, and for “ ever.” When we can no longer have the benefit of their animating presence, of their pious exhortations, or of their powerfully alluring example, still we have preserved with us what is of yet far greater importance, that very word from which they drew whatever was most beautiful and most valuable in these. “ All flesh is “ grass, and the glory of man as the flower of “ the grass : the grass withereth, and the flower “ thereof falleth away : but the word of the “ Lord endureth for ever. And I saw another “ angel fly in the midst of heaven, having “ the Everlasting Gospel, to preach unto them “ that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, “ and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

Now we say that the gospel may be stiled with propriety Everlasting, as it contains an invariable rule of conduct, as it conveys an immortal principle of life, and as it opens an inexhaustible source of joy. A few thoughts on each of these, and then some application to the principal purpose for which we pitch'd on this argument. May the Almighty assist us in the whole!

I. WE said that the gospel might be stiled with propriety, Everlasting, as it contains an invariable rule of conduct. "Think not that I
 " am come to destroy the law or the prophets.
 " I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For
 " verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth
 " pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass
 " from the law, till all be fulfilled." Such is the express declaration of the great Lawgiver in the kingdom of God, speaking, as is plain from the purport of his discourse, concerning those moral precepts chiefly, which Jehovah had delivered to the Jewish legislator, which the hypocritical teachers that afterwards sat in his chair had made void by their vain traditions, their false glosses, and their frivolous, their wicked inventions, and which our blessed Lord laboured with particular sollicitude to vindicate from the
 vile

vile abuse. The ritual as well as political part of the antient œconomy was merely temporary and local; neither could it “ make the comers “ thereunto perfect,” as an apostle hath assured us. That therefore the founder of this last and best constitution, which we call Christianity, did, by the plenitude of power with which he was invested, very naturally lay aside, whilst he adopted into his religion whatever was truly and eternally excellent in that of Moses; I mean those laws already mentioned, which prescribing a spiritual devotion and a sound morality, did enter with the utmost congruity into our Saviour’s system, professedly calculated to regulate the temper and behaviour not of this or that peculiar people, but of mankind at large, in every nation, and through every age to which it should extend.

In reality the principal part of those laws were written by the finger of God on the heart of man. They approve themselves in general to the most intimate perceptions of the human mind. The former of our frame hath shewn us, by an original and internal light, “ what is good, and “ what the Lord doth require of us, even to do “ justice, and to love mercy, and to walk hum-
“ bly

“bly with our God.” These are duties founded on the immutable relations of things, or on those connexions in which we stand, have ever stood, and shall always stand to our Maker and to one another. And the commandments which enjoin them may be consider’d as the transcript of the will of the universal and everlasting Father, relating to the perfection and happiness of his intelligent offspring here below. But, alas, my brethren, however fair that transcript may be in itself, they for whose use it was designed were, by their apostacy from their great Parent, so sunk in ignorance, corruption, imbecillity, and guilt, that it alone was not sufficient for their restoration and felicity. They wanted more particular and powerful instruction in their duty, with more striking and encouraging motives to it, than any which nature’s notices could furnish. They wanted a strength, a spirit to support them in it, much superior to their own, and effectual consolation under the fears and the feelings of divine displeasure which followed their transgressions.

He who made them had mercy upon them, and “so loved the world as to give his only
“begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him
“might

“ might not perish but might have life everlasting.” And he is now “ made of God ” to all his followers, “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” He hath supplied the defects of nature : he hath given us a religion most admirably adapted to our make and situation, as rational and immortal, but without depraved and distressed creatures. And this religion, being the consummation of the counsels of God for our recovery and salvation, being brought to us by the greatest messenger that ever appeared in his name, his well-beloved Son, whom for his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, in execution of the benevolent plan, he hath made “ heir of all things, “ exalting him as a prince and a saviour ; ” and in fine being at once the object and the completion of all the mighty operations of Providence, which led to it through every preceeding age, we are to regard it as the supreme and ultimate standard by which we should govern our views and our lives in every circumstance of our present being, and by our conformity to which, or the contrary, our condition will be decided for all futurity.

UNDER

UNDER the comprehensive and perfect administration of the Messiah, difference of country, of time, of place, of fortune, of rank, or of capacity, can make no difference as to the obligations to believe and obey him. "His kingdom ruleth over all: his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness; and of his dominion there is no end." The fundamental statutes of his government cannot be affected by any diversity or alteration of political forms, or civil modes, or ecclesiastical canons, or speculative opinions whatsoever. In Christ Jesus, the head of the catholic church, "the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords," the lover of Men, the patron of humanity, and "the prince of peace," in him, I say, "there is neither Jew, nor Greek, nor Barbarian, nor Scythian, nor bond, nor free; but he is all, and in all." He embraceth all, cares for all, prescribes for all, conducts all. And as all power is given to him on earth, so in heaven too. His authority not only reacheth to every successive generation of men in their progress through this probationary state, but enters with them into the regions of retribution, appoints the place of their residence there, and fixeth it for ever. Yes, my brethren, "we must all, all appear before the judgment-seat"

“ feat of Christ, to receive according to the deeds
 “ done in the body, whether they are good or
 “ evil;” to receive our final and unchangeable
 portion, which will be determined by the mea-
 sures of that Everlasting Gospel we now profess
 to reverence, as the invariable rule of our con-
 duct.—That was the first point proposed to be
 considered.

II. THE next was this, That the same
 Everlasting Gospel conveys an immortal prin-
 ciple of life. It doth so, when happily sown
 in the heart, in what our Saviour calls “ an
 “ honest and good heart.” I need not tell you,
 that he spoke a parable on the subject of the
 word, under the image of “ feed which a sower
 “ went forth to sow ;” an image as just, as it is
 beautiful. In the same manner, as any parti-
 cular species of seed contains in itself the form
 and origin of the plant which grows from it,
 and when thrown into a soil properly prepared,
 it is gradually impregnated by the powers of
 vegetation, till it puts forth, takes root, springs
 up, shoots out, spreads, blossoms, and in due
 time produceth “ fruit after its kind ;” so the
 word, which comprehends the rules and the
 sources of holy living, being received into a
 C mind

mind disposed by heavenly culture to entertain it, takes hold of the understanding, of the will, and of the affections, sinks deep into a man's thoughts, secretly but strongly influenceth his resolutions, insinuates itself with wonderful force and yet sweetness into his various inclinations, and, by the continued co-operation of grace and of reason, enables him "to bring forth fruit unto perfection," the noblest of all fruit, that of "righteousness and true holiness, the end of which is eternal life," as its flavour is the foretaste of the paradise on high.

You will readily perceive, I speak not now of those superficial and transient impressions frequently made by the word, which our master hath so well described in that lively allegory referred to, but of those more interesting, more prevailing, and more abiding persuasions, which are imprinted on the soul by the grand doctrines of religion, in concurrence with the power of the "Spirit of grace," by whom they were at first dictated, and are afterwards enforced; I mean that omnipotent agent in the kingdom of Christ, who opens the hearts of men "to receive the truth in the love thereof, to mix it with faith,"
and

and to make it a living, moving, active, diffusive form of evangelical virtue and devotion.

WHEN this is the case, when spiritual and invisible realities are relished and felt, when the venerable objects and majestic “ powers of the “ world to come ” have acquired an ascendancy over the mind, when that doth not only approve universally, but steadily and chearfully, though still imperfectly, comply with whatever appears to be “ the good, and holy, and acceptable will of God ; ” in short, when the precepts, the sanctions, the examples, and the great leading facts, exhibited in the scriptures, have so penetrated and possessed a man’s inmost soul, as to mould it into a Godlike temper, the result of which is a real character of goodness in his whole deportment, or “ a conversation “ becoming the Gospel ; ” then, my brethren, then that man is a partaker “ of the divine “ nature : Christ is formed in him the hope “ of glory : the seed of God remains in him : ” it is then true of him that he is “ born from “ above, born of God, born of the will of “ God, born of the spirit of God, born of the “ incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth

“for ever.” Such is the language of inspiration.

HE who is thus divinely descended, shall never sure be finally forsaken, but shall be “kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto salvation.” That vital principle within him, which is nothing less than a part of God’s own life and being, can never possibly be broken off from its source and center. The new man being like his Parent divine, is like him immortal too. “He who hath begun the good work will carry it on to the day of compleat redemption.” This plant, of our heavenly Father’s planting, shall be cultivated, protected, and cherished with care, till it hath attained its full maturity and beauty; to which it arrives at last in the garden of God, after a growth in this nursery of the world, sometimes quicker, sometimes slower, sometimes interrupted, but never destroyed, by temptation, always strengthened by exercise, and often advancing in a thousand mysterious and imperceptible ways, the philosophy of which, like numberless things in nature, cannot be explained, whilst the effects are felt and visible. “The wind,” saith our Saviour, treating on this
very

very subject, "bloweth where it listeth; and
 "thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not
 "tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:
 "so is every one that is born of the spirit."

THE beginnings of piety are often scarcely discernible; but being kindled by the breath of God, that spark of divinity is by degrees blown into a flame, which mounts upward, and upward, and still upward, till it reacheth to the throne of the Eternal, and mingles with the fires of seraphim. To change the metaphor, "the Spirit" whom Christ imparts to his disciples, is in them "a well of water springing up
 "into eternal life." It is one of his own allusions, and very finely expresseth the point we are endeavouring to prove. What shall I say more? Under the righteous reign of Jesus, that "everlasting righteousness" which he descended, and lived, and died, and rose again to bring in, that righteousness which is God's own image, and glory, and felicity, the ornament and joy of his whole intellectual family, and the ruling purpose of all his schemes and energies from the beginning to the end, that righteousness, my brethren, must prosper, must prevail; and
 "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,

“palities, nor powers, nor things present, nor
 “things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor
 “any other creature, shall be able to separate”
 the pious and the just “from the love of God,
 “which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The
 “Everlasting Gospel” becomes in them an im-
 mortal principle of life.—That was the second
 part of our plan.

III. THE third was this, that Christianity
 answers the character in the text, as it opens to
 its votaries an inexhaustible spring of joy.
 Christianity considers man as in a state of
 distress, occasioned by disagreeable reflections
 on the past, painful sensations from the present,
 and fearful forebodings of the future. I will not
 pretend to enumerate, still less to paint, the mul-
 tiplied and melancholy shapes of human misery.
 I chuse to spare both you and myself, on so sad
 a theme. But let us suppose a serious and
 thoughtful man to sit down by himself, and to
 survey with a sober eye the nameless calamities
 both real and imaginary, which men complain
 of; to observe “the fashion of this world”
 passing away, its scenes perpetually shifting,
 the actors appearing for a little while, laugh-
 ing and weeping in the same hour, and then
 vanishing

vanishing in swift succession, to return no more; even the dearest friends, the finest spirits, and the sweetest companions on earth, dropping away from time to time; and every external object that fancy admires, or passion pursues, or appetite delights in, subjected to all the casualties of life, and shrinking in a moment at the approaches of death; till the abyss of eternity swallows up at last the naked, the widowed, and the solitary soul. Above all the rest, let him figure to himself the heart-felt pangs and deep prophetic horrors, of conscious guilt in awakened offenders. Or let him even attend to the secret misgivings of his own mind, on a review of his many failings. Suppose him to think of all this, in a season of sickness, of sorrow, or of dejection; for such seasons will take place.—Let us now suppose some Christian preacher, or pious friend, to visit him in this conjuncture, and, finding the situation of his mind, to address him with an air and a voice of solemn tenderness, in the following manner.

‘ My dear Sir, “ let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God : believe also in “ Jesus.” In his “ Father’s house are many “ mansions : if it were not so he would have “ told”

“ told” us, such was his sincerity and fairness.
 ‘ You may rely on his testimony. He came
 ‘ down from that world, in order to give the
 ‘ most unparalleled proofs of his love to the
 ‘ sons of men, with whom “ his delights have
 “ always been.” He is gone up to it again, on
 ‘ purpose “ to prepare a place” for his people.
 ‘ The present life is properly but the infancy of
 ‘ your being. It is merely preparatory for, and
 ‘ introductory to, a higher and happier state of
 ‘ existence. Here, it is certain, you have “ no
 “ continuing city of abode;” but you may and
 ‘ ought to look for “ one to come, a city which
 “ hath foundations, whose builder and maker
 “ is God.” The creation is his empire; but
 ‘ heaven is his court, where all his dutiful and
 ‘ faithful subjects shall at length assemble. The
 ‘ earth you now inhabit, is a distant province of
 ‘ his vast monarchy. Here, Sir, you, with
 ‘ your brethren of mankind, are banished for
 ‘ rebelling against the laws of the Supreme.
 ‘ When you return to your primitive allegiance,
 ‘ you may hope to return to your native coun-
 ‘ try, and be admitted to the heavenly palace.

‘ In this place of our exile, the illustrious Son
 ‘ of the offended Monarch vouchsafed to visit
 ‘ our

' our guilty race. He submitted to the severest
 ' things, that he might reform and restore them.
 ' His is the fraternal sympathetic soul. ' By
 ' assuming our nature, he contracted "a fellow-
 " feeling of our infirmities." In short, he par-
 ' ticipated in all our pains, and pities us. You,
 ' my friend, and I, and all who believe in his
 ' name, are under his immediate superintend-
 ' ance. He now " appears in the presence of
 " God for us," appears as our elder brother,
 ' our best well-wisher, and our faithful, no less
 ' than able, advocate. In Him the Father is
 ' always highly pleased, and is at this time
 ' actually " reconciling the world to himself, not
 " imputing to men their trespasses," pardoning
 ' the sins of the penitent, " reviving the hearts
 " of the humble," and sending forth into every
 ' obedient believer " the Spirit of his Son," under
 ' the mildest and kindest character imaginable,
 ' that of the Comforter.

' THIS all-pervading, purifying, and consoling
 ' Spirit, like the adorable Father of all, and
 ' that divine philanthropist, whose delegate he
 ' is, concerns himself deeply in the affairs of
 ' human nature. It's prosperity and honour are
 ' dear to him. Provided you will ask him in

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' the name of Christ, receive him with reve-
 ' rence, and entertain him with affection, he
 ' will not disdain to dwell in you, as in his tem-
 ' ple: and if he doth, he will not fail to support
 ' you against the strength of temptation, to cheer
 ' you amidst the gloom of grief, to aid you in
 ' every effort, in every aspiration after God and
 ' goodness, to sustain you with peculiar power
 ' under the sharper conflicts of Christian virtue.
 ' And having carried you on, sometimes with a
 ' triumphant superiority, but, lest that should
 ' engender pride, more often with a modest
 ' tranquillity, through the trials of life, he will
 ' inspire you at last with such fortitude, faith,
 ' and hope, from the delightful attestation of
 ' conscience, and the dawnings of eternal day
 ' within you, as shall abundantly serve to com-
 ' fort and illuminate your passage " through the
 ' " valley of the shadow of death." All beyond,
 ' Sir, is happiness unmixed, immutable, and
 ' immortal.

' JESUS is " the resurrection and the life.
 ' " Because he lives, you shall live also." You
 ' shall live in the very embraces of death. That
 ' dreaded power shall be converted, by his Con-
 ' queror and your Redeemer, into a friend.
 ' And

‘ And there is a future period in the administra-
 ‘ tion of Jesus, when you shall spring from the
 ‘ dust of the grave, beautiful as light, and vigo-
 ‘ rous as the sons of the morning.

‘ As for all your best friends, they are either
 ‘ gone or going to enjoy unruffled repose in the
 ‘ bosom of their and your Saviour; where, if you
 ‘ now resemble, you shall at length rejoin them,
 ‘ to suffer the stroke of separation no more.
 “ Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord:
 “ they rest from their labours; and their works
 “ follow them. Comfort yourself with these
 “ words; Them that sleep in Jesus, God shall
 “ bring with him.”

‘ As to this theatre of uncertainty, it will
 ‘ soon give place to infinitely grander and fairer
 ‘ scenes, “ a new heaven and a new earth,
 “ wherein dwelleth righteousness,” with all her
 ‘ lovely and happy train. “ Sorrow and sigh-
 “ ing,” the offspring of sin, “ shall flee away.”
 “ Your light afflictions, which are but for a mo-
 “ ment,” shall only be remembered, to add to
 “ that far more exceeding and eternal weight of
 “ glory,” which they shall have wrought for
 ‘ you. Here indeed is the vale of tears, and the

' land of graves : this at best is a distempered,
 ' a discordant, a warring world. But lift thine
 ' eye to yonder serene, and healthful, and har-
 ' monious abode. No inhabitant there shall
 ' ever say " I am sick." God himself shall
 ' wipe away every tear from every eye : and
 ' not a name or sound shall strike the ear, less
 ' pleasing or less transporting, than those of
 ' praise, and joy, and love, and purity, and peace
 ' for ever.'

WHAT say ye, Sirs ? What think ye, would
 be the feelings of the person we have supposed,
 on hearing and considering these things ? I
 submit it to you, whether he would not pro-
 bably perceive a certain holy magnanimity
 growing within him, a certain sublime inde-
 pendance on this little world, with an inex-
 pressible gratitude to heaven for that " Ever-
 " lasting Gospel" which yields so many joyful
 and elevating views ?

WOULD you charge him with enthusiasm,
 if in the honest rapture of devotion, he should
 be prompted to cry out, " Oh, thou divine reli-
 ' gion of the divine Redeemer ! What shall we
 ' men render to Him, for opening, by thy means,
 ' such

‘ such a source of consolation, as will constantly
 ‘ refresh us in our journey through life, as will
 ‘ not fail us in death itself, but following us,
 ‘ under the nobler name of joy, beyond the
 ‘ grave, will flow on, with an increasing cur-
 ‘ rent, through all the boundless fields of im-
 ‘ mortality ?”

If these things are so, then surely we can
 never have cause to be “ ashamed of the testi-
 “ mony of Jesus.” On the contrary, his Gospel
 is a subject of everlasting exultation to all its
 sincere professors. Let its ablest antagonists
 produce, if they can, a religion containing at
 once such pure and perfect morals, such a trans-
 forming and animating energy, with ideas so
 reviving and ravishing to the human mind, so
 fraught with comfort to the miserable, and so
 pregnant with hope to the guilty. Let them
 produce, if they can, a religion entitled, like
 Christianity, to the character of being a pub-
 lication of the statutes, a copy of the perfections,
 and a history of the proceedings of the Almighty,
 so far as mankind are concerned ; delivered to
 them with a solemnity and majesty which seem
 to intimate its being intended for the greatest
 and most lasting purposes, delivered, I say, for
 their

their instruction, reformation, and comfort, through all their generations; with an ultimate view to their final exaltation and felicity in the immortal empire of God.

MAY not this sun of the moral world be compared to that of the natural, which seeth those generations waste, whilst himself remains unchanged and undecayed, shining on from age to age, diffusing light, and warmth, and genial influence over the creation, through all its periods, and will continue the munificent office till it's last concluding one, when time shall be no more, when the diurnal wheel of nature shall stand still, and this imperfect system make way for something finished and transcendant? Then indeed that brighter luminary, the written word, like the other, shall cease to exist. The word preached, shall be preached no more. All the ends of both having been fully accomplished, a different œconomy shall ensue. The state of discipline shall terminate in a state of enjoyment. The age of education under Jesus, the great master of Israel, shall be over. His disciples shall have all compleated their course in his school, and grown up "to the fulness of "the stature of men made perfect" in Him. The
mighty

mighty plan of redeeming wisdom and grace being entirely executed, and the glorious structure raised upon it, happily crowned, the scaffolding will be taken down. There will be no longer use for those ordinances, institutions, and spiritual instruments, which were necessary to its erection. Yet nevertheless, the Gospel, by which these were appointed, will still deserve to be termed Everlasting, since its marvellous operations and consequences will reach forward to the days of eternity; and the truths, the facts, and the principles which it exhibits, will be the never-ceasing subjects of the contemplation, applause, and homage of the whole "general assembly and church of the first-born."

AGAIN, are these things so? Let us admire and worship that miraculous Providence, by whose protection the records of our inestimable religion, have amidst all the revolutions of time, and numberless vicissitudes of human affairs, remained to this day, as we have reason to believe, unadulterated, unaltered in any material instance or degree. Noble cities have perished by fire; whole provinces have been swallowed up in earthquakes; large countries have been laid waste with famine, pestilence, and all-
de-

destroying war; famous monarchies have risen and fell by turns, sinking successively into slavery, barbarity, and brutal ignorance. But the precious treasure of the sacred writings hath all along been preserved by the particular guardian care of that gracious being who first bestowed it on the children of men. Many a valuable and illustrious production of genius, of learning, and of art, which merited a better fate, have been lost in the lapse of ages, by the burning of libraries and museums, by the incursions and ravages of barbarians, and the various injuries of the invading elements. But this blessed book, the Bible, by an astonishing disposition of things, continues unhurt and entire. No violence of tyrants, no rage of persecution, hath ever been able to rob the church of that divine deposit.

WHEN the nations were overspread with general darkness, and the world had well nigh lost every living trace of the Christian faith, in that dreadful night of superstition and monkery, which for several ages involved and disgraced mankind, the Gospel itself was still secure, not depending on precarious tradition, but being fully contained in the heaven-inspired volume.

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To that invaluable repository, and unerring standard of truth, our great Reformers had their recourse, and made their appeal. And notwithstanding all the efforts of craft or malice, by which hereticks and infidels have laboured to suppress or corrupt it, we are under no difficulty to this hour of deriving from thence the genuine knowledge of "the Everlasting Gospel." To allude to the words of our text, "an angel flying with it in the midst of heaven" hath guarded it from all their ungodly attempts, and we are in possession at this moment of the greatest gift of God to men.

How comfortable a reflection on all occasions, but more especially when at any time it pleaseth Providence to deprive us of conscientious and capable teachers, who were wont to speak to us "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God", and to the peace of our souls! The authority by which they spoke, the persuasion which followed their words, the information, the edification, and the frequent support which we received by their ministry; whence were these borrowed, or to what power shall we ascribe them? Not surely to any thing in mortal man, abstracted from that religion which is immortal. "Cease then from man, whose

“breath is in his nostrils.” And when your ministers are taken away, remember for your relief, that the Gospel which they preached is Everlasting ; that its Author who sent them, “is alive for evermore ;” and that he who hath given to “the word of his grace” such surprising perpetuity, will not fail to provide for its continued propagation.

YOUR thoughts, my beloved brethren, have already prevented me, in making the transition here to a tender subject, in which many of you have taken a very natural and laudable concern. You all know what I mean. I will take the liberty to introduce what I have to say on this head, by reading to you a short and succinct narrative of some facts relating to our excellent friend now in heaven, which I received the other day from a person who may be credited.

‘ Dr. SAMUEL LAWRENCE was born at
 ‘ Nantwich in Cheshire, in 1693. His father
 ‘ was minister of a congregation of Protestant
 ‘ dissenters there, a man of remarkable piety
 ‘ and extensive literature. Mr. Matthew Henry
 ‘ preached his funeral sermon, and gave him a
 ‘ very honourable character both as a scholar
 ‘ and a Christian. The Doctor, who was his
 ‘ second

' second son, was sent by him to the grammar-
 ' school at Bethnal-Green, about a mile from
 ' London, which was in a very flourishing con-
 ' dition at that time, and where some of the
 ' greatest personages of this kingdom received
 ' the first rudiments of learning.

' HAVING acquired a competent knowledge
 ' of the languages, which he did very early in
 ' life, he was sent to the university of Glasgow,
 ' where he continued several years, performing
 ' a course of academical studies. When he left
 ' that place, he returned to his father's house,
 ' being too young to engage in the stated la-
 ' bours of the ministerial function. His father,
 ' who knew well the importance of laying a
 ' solid foundation in useful knowledge, read
 ' lectures to him while he remained at home,
 ' which was upwards of a year, both in philo-
 ' logy and philosophy. The pains taken upon
 ' him were far from being lost: he made very
 ' considerable improvements, and at length be-
 ' came, as many can testify, " a workman that
 " needed not to be ashamed." Before he settled
 ' as a minister, he was tutor to the eldest son of
 ' the late chief baron Ward; the duties of which
 ' office he discharged with fidelity. The first
 ' congregation he was connected with, was at

' Newcastle under Line, in 1714. He was there
 ' ordained ; and there he married a person of a
 ' very reputable family, and of a disposition truly
 ' agreeable. By her he had eight children, of
 ' whom only one is now alive. May she live
 ' long. On the death of Mr. Bennet, the author
 ' of the Christian Oratory, the Doctor had a pres-
 ' sing invitation in 1727, to succeed him in the
 ' pastoral office at Newcastle upon Tyne, of which
 ' he accepted. The people there greatly esteemed
 ' him, and love his memory to this day. But a
 ' very ill state of health rendering a long stay
 ' amongst them impossible, he determined to ac-
 ' cept of an unanimous call, which he received
 ' in 1733, to settle with this congregation ; Mr.
 ' Daniel Wilcox, their late pastor, being dead.
 ' Here he had for many years a crowded au-
 ' ditory, his labours being very acceptable, and
 ' very successful. In 1755, Mrs. Lawrence
 ' died. He submitted to the stroke as a Christian,
 ' whilst he felt it as a man. They were a
 ' happy pair.'

SUFFER me now to subjoin a few remarks
 with regard to this amiable man, chiefly drawn
 from my own observation, during my short ac-
 quaintance with him. A more amiable man at
 his time of life, I never was acquainted with.

The

The striking feature in his character was a happy mixture of seriousness, cheerfulness, and politeness, which he possessed to a degree that few could equal, and none exceed. Beautiful qualities these are; and when blended and tempered together with skill, to be sure they produce a very fine effect. But how delicate the task; and how rare the attainment!

DR. LAWRENCE had all the ease of the gentleman, without departing in the least from the decorum of the clergyman. He knew life. He had read men, as well as books. He seemed to me endowed with a nice discernment in characters. And this I can freely affirm, that I never received more sensible advice, or more useful communications, either as to persons or things, from any man, than from him. His acquaintance with the world, the felicity of his temper, and the courteousness of his deportment, joined to make him quite the agreeable companion. His truth and probity superadded to these, rendered him also a very valuable friend. His friendship, so far as I could perceive, never degenerated into weakness or flattery. He certainly was master of a talent not very common in persons of any station, and particularly requisite in those of his, that of engaging

gaging love and respect at the same time. Indeed, he knew too well what belonged to his place and profession, ever to allow any to trample on him. But then he behaved so, that few, I believe, ever thought of attempting it.

IN what union and concord he lived with his flock here, for almost seven-and-twenty years together, you, my brethren, can best tell. How he was esteemed by good men of different denominations, you are not ignorant. He had too much sense, and too much worth, to be a bigot. His soul was too liberal, and too candid, to be enslaved to narrow prejudices, or to little passions.

You will not be surprised, that after such a life, "the latter end of this man was peace." It is but justice to his memory to mention, that the last time I saw him, his great distress from the dropsy, of which he died soon after, had taken nothing away from the beauty of his dispositions. His humble piety, his manly composure, and his singular attention to every thing that the truest attachment, or the best breeding, could possibly suggest, not without a tincture of harmless pleasantry that was natural to him, these were such as really struck and charmed me.

WITH

WITH relation to his performances in the pulpit, I could form but little judgment from the single specimen I had of them ; especially as he was then declining fast in his health and spirits. But there were in his manner and stile at that time, an affection and simplicity, which, joined with his age and character, gave great weight to what he said.

THUS much a regard to truth hath led me to say concerning our departed friend, whom if it had been the will of God to spare with us awhile longer for farther usefulness, I am persuaded that every one of us would have felt a sincere satisfaction. I can answer for myself. Be thankful, however, that he was spared so long, to shew you, both by his instructions and example, the way of salvation. Think, such of you as heard and knew him, what he preached, and practise it ; what he was, and copy him. Imitate the goodness of his heart, and the sweetness of his manners. Recollect the plain practical principles which he taught you, and live upon them daily. I verily believe, you may die in them safely. Take care, that you never have cause to repent of the advantages you enjoyed by his ministrations. There is, there is a day approaching, when you must account
for

for the use you made of them. Let "the Everlasting Gospel" which he preached, be now the unalterable rule, as it will then be the final test of your conduct. Let nothing less content you than a large experience of that internal, celestial, and immortal life, which Christianity inspires. And seek, oh seek, above all the feeble and fugitive joys of this world, that "strong and everlasting consolation which is in Christ Jesus."

WHAT pleasure would it give to that good man even in heaven, if aught on earth can touch his soul, now exalted so far above it, to think that you of this society, so many years known and dear to him, for whose salvation he studied, and prayed, and laboured, and lived, shall add one day to his joy and crown!—And then that last, last meeting with him in the higher temple, where he and you, who conversed and worshipped with one another below so long and so affectionately, shall associate, and sing, and triumph together for ever—I thought to have described it, but am not able—Mortality weighs me down—

T H E

T H E
A D D R E S S

AT THE INTERMENT.

MEN, BRETHREN, AND FATHERS,

IN that grave you have seen deposited all that was mortal of a good and pious man. His immortal part hath gained its native skies, through the merits of that divine Master whom he preached and served. Good he was without pretence, and pious without shew. He loved his God and Saviour sincerely, was kind to his friends, and courteous to all; so thoroughly kind, as not to need the modish arts of profession and compliment, and so truly courteous as not to use them. He knew the vanity of the world well; and he despised

F pised

pised it. He discerned, from long and large observation, the worthlessness of bad men, and the weaknesses of the best. The former he pitied, and the latter he overlooked. It was the business and the joy of his life, to promote at once the salvation and the satisfaction of all with whom he was connected. Good nature, good sense, and singular chearfulness, concurred to make him a pleasing acquaintance and friend. Valuable knowledge, unaffected devotion, undissembled benevolence, and well-directed zeal, contributed to render him a faithful and useful pastor. But——“ It is appointed for all men once to die ;” and the wise and the worthy must submit to the irreversible decree, as well as the fool and the profligate. ” Our fathers where “ are they ; and the prophets do they live for “ ever ?” The experienced and the excellent are taken away. Must we add, “ and no man “ regards it ;” no man lays to heart the world’s loss, or considers in good earnest his latter end ? This, I hope, is not universally true. Some, I trust, there are who feel, and deeply feel both for the public and for themselves, on such occasions ; who revere the will of Providence in removing from our earth, that can so ill spare them,

them, prudent, upright, and religious men ; and who, knowing that they themselves must shortly “ go the way of all flesh,” strive to be “ followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” To such, I am sure, a scene of this kind will not fail, by the blessing of God, to be a source of edification. Visiting this “ house of mourning” will make their hearts better. It will make them sad indeed ; but by “ the sorrow of the countenance,” the soul is collected, the passions are composed, every lighter thought, every less Christian or less becoming pursuit and disposition are corrected ; and a considerate spirit, sober counsels, a devouter frame, a more delicate, powerful, and permanent feeling of things unseen and eternal, are acquired and cultivated.

THESE, my friends, are very proper impressions for you to cherish at this time in particular. And while such sentiments possess your minds, let me beg that you would look up to “ the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift,” and implore of his mercy through a Mediator, consolation to those who mourn the loss of our departed friend,

and faith to all who knew and heard him, to make the right improvement of his example and instructions.

As to his immediate connections, the principles they profess, and the views, I persuade myself, they entertain, will lead them to such considerations of comfort, and to such a course of conduct, as are suited to this event so naturally and so greatly affecting to them. I would only remind them of one joyful truth, that "them who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him;" and of another important one, that he will expect they should follow their beloved relatives, so far as he followed Christ,

WHAT shall I say to those whom curiosity alone hath brought to this place; who having gazed a while at the mournful spectacle, will go away, and forget it in an hour? I mean, that either they will receive from it no impression at all, or if they are led to make a momentary reflection on the lot of mortality, they will lose it in a very little space, and return to business, company, or pleasure, with as great, if not greater eagerness than before. Nothing, I am sorry to say it, is more common.

How

How many funerals have you witnessed? How often have you seen, amidst these sad ensigns, "death riding upon his pale horse," and the eternal world following after him? How often have you heard the ministers of religion endeavour to fix your thoughts on the solemn object, and to impress on your breasts ideas of human frailty, of the necessity of faith, repentance, and persevering obedience, in order to prepare you for that awful change, which so many opportunities of this nature should lead you to remember? Many of you, perhaps, have been struck at the instant. Your faces, perhaps, have turned pale. Perhaps, your eyes have dropt a tear, the tear of humanity, of natural tenderness, or of friendly compassion. You have, it may be, thought with yourselves, 'such is the end of all living. By and by, the mourners for me shall go about the streets in the same manner, and accompany this body, as they have done that, to the dark, cold, and silent grave. Surely then I ought to be prepared, to have my loins girt, and my lamp burning, that I may meet my change with serenity, and my Judge with joy.' But alas, no sooner scarce did you leave the burying-ground, rejoin your friends

friends or acquaintance, reingage in secular affairs or amusements, than every trace of thought and tendency to good, which the striking view had left upon you, were gone; and the world, with all its bustle, and all its blandishments, rushed upon your imaginations, took possession of your hearts, and made you seven times more the children of folly than ever——Is this right? Is it rational in beings designed for religion, and formed for eternity, who in a few days, or months, or years at most——what do I say? who, for aught any one of you knows, may this very night have your souls required of you, and your doom determined beyond the possibility of alteration for ever?

WERE you now to die, Sir, say in sober sadness, do you think, do you really think, that you are ready? Go away, and ask that question at yourself. Lay your hand upon your heart, and press the enquiry home to it, in the presence of him who made and searcheth it; ‘Am I ready to die? Should death seize me this night, to what world would it convey me?’ If you are quite unprepared for the grandest and most interesting of all events, and yet

yet can be merry, and laugh, and sing, and sleep, and eat, and drink, and play, and pursue gain, and cumber yourself about many things, or devote your affections to any particular vanity; if that is the case, and you can persist in so desperate, so distracted a career, against the inward convictions you often feel, and the better resolutions you sometimes form, it will then be but fair in you to renounce, I say not the name of Christian only, but the very name of Man. If on the contrary, ashamed of such infatuation, you are at last resolved, by the grace of God, to act a better part, to the direction and assistance of that grace I heartily recommend you, and pray the Redeemer of men may lead you on to deep contrition, and real amendment of life and manners.

I have done, when I have taken a last and long farewell of the honoured remains of my reverend Friend——Adieu, thou sleeping dust of a man I loved and valued much! Adieu till the morning of the judgment-day! Sleep on, till that mighty period arrives, safe in the protection of Him who hath “the keys of death”, and of the invisible state. May I, may all these
people,

people, meet thee “ at the resurrection of the
 “ just,” rescued from the dishonours of the
 grave, arrayed in the splendours of immortality,
 and reunited to the joyful spirit that formerly
 enlivened thee, now made perfect. With that
 blessed faint, thus glorified and thus happy,
 may you, my brethren, and I, live happy and
 glorified for ever. Amen.



THE END.

